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By Staff Sgt. Cindy Fisher, HEADQUARTERS MARINE CORPS, Washington

'CHANGES IN CORPS' FUTURE WILL BENEFIT MARINES'

End-Strength,
Restructure to Increase
Crucial Capabilities

Big changes are on the horizon
for the Marine Corps.

An increase in end-strength and a shift in capabilities over the next few years will enable Marines and the Corps to better meet the demands of future conflicts, say the Corps' top leaders.

THE MARINE CORPS PROVIDES AMERICA THE BEST RETURN FOR ITS military dollar, receiving about 6.5 percent of the Department of Defense budget and in return providing about 20 percent of the U.S. forces combat power. To do this and remain the nation's force-in-readiness, the Corps periodically re-examines its operational capabilities and adapts to the changing situations of the world.

The most recent review began in 2004 when Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps Gen. "Spider" Nyland convened a 30-day Force Structure Review Group. Its purpose was to examine the Corps' force structure and how to rebalance it in light of emerging 21st century threats.

"We took a look at what capabilities we need (to fight the Global War on Terrorism); what capabilities does the combatant commander need. We want to provide those capabilities," said Commandant of the Marine Corps Gen. Michael Hagee.

Future wars will increasingly be fought with asymmetrical warfare, he said in All Marine Message 018/05 signed April 18. Asymmetrical warfare, sometimes referred to as irregular warfare or fourth generation warfare, is conflict that deviates from the norm of force-on-force warfare.

In Operation Iraqi Freedom, the Corps' enemies learned that in traditional engagements, when their units combat Marine units, "they are going to lose," Gen. Hagee said. "They don't want to take us on in a normal formation.

"So they are attacking us asymmetrically," he said. Marines in Iraq and Afghanistan are combating asymmetrical warfare tactics such as improvised explosive devises and enemy propaganda. FSRG and the resulting initiatives

> MARINE CORPS RECRUIT

DEPOT SAN DIEGO – Passage of the National Defense Authorization Act of fiscal year 2005, Oct. 8, 2004, raised the Marine Corps end-strength to 178,000, an increase of 3,000 Marines to be phased in over the next three years. Two-thirds of the boost will go toward increasing the Corps' infantry battalions up to 100 percent of their wartime requirement.

Photo by Cpl. Jess Levens



A RECENT APPROVAL TO INCREASE THE MARINE CORPS' END-STRENGTH WILL HELP MAN THESE NEW UNITS. THE NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT OF FISCAL YEAR 2005, PASSED OCT. 8, 2004, INCREASES THE MARINE CORPS END-STRENGTH BY 3,000.

> **WASHINGTON** – Gen. Hagee testifies to members of the House Appropriations Committee (Defense Subcommittee) during a fiscal year 2006 Navy/ Marine Corps Budget Overview Hearing March 10. The Committee is an important part of the Federal funding process that proposed a total for \$75.9 billion for total defense related expenditures in the supplemental for force protection, and to increasing the survivability of troops in the field. To read more about the Committee for Appropriations and how it affects the GWOT visit their Web site at <http://appropriations.house.gov>.

Photo by Chief Petty Officer Craig P. Strawser



> **HONOLULU** – Gunnery Sgt. Elmer G. Pagaragan, 28, Recruiter of the Year for RS Orange County in 2004, discusses the opportunities available in the Marine Corps' aviation electronics military occupational specialty with Pfc. Richard D. Luis, a Marine recruited by Pagaragan during his award-winning year. The requirement for additional recruiters affords more Marines an opportunity to fill a potential advantageous, career enhancing "B" billet. See the story on Page 31 for more about the advantages of recruiting duty.

Photo by Lance Cpl. Bernadette L. Ainsworth



crafted the restructure the Corps needs to combat these challenges.

"The bottom line with the FSRG is that it is necessary in helping to balance and shape our forces for future operations," said Sgt. Maj. of the Marine Corps John Estrada.

New Concepts, New Units

Concepts, such as distributed operations and sea basing, and initiatives, like increased language and cultural training, are incorporated into the reorganization plan.

Distributed Operations

Distributed Operations is a logical extension of maneuver warfare, which seeks to exploit an enemy's weaknesses, its gaps, seams and center of gravity. The concept decentralizes decision-making and places greater responsibilities on the Corps' junior leaders.

In DO, a networked squad to battalion-sized unit disperses over the breadth and depth of a much larger area of the battle space. The various elements of the squad, platoon, company or battalion remain connected

through information technology to maintain situational awareness.

Distributed ops more effectively uses the capabilities of individual Marines, but sea basing will get them to the fight faster, said Gen. Hagee.

Sea Basing

"Sea basing is going to give us the capability to put a Marine Expeditionary Brigade of about 15,000 Marines any place in the world in 10 to 12 days. We can't do that today, but with sea basing we will be able to do that (in the future)," Gen. Hagee said.

Marines will eventually be able to complete all stages of arrival and assembly from platforms at sea and cross the line of departure from sea, the general said.

Sea basing has numerous benefits beyond speed. It greatly reduces the Corps' footprint ashore. Marines will

only bring the assets they need with them for a particular mission. Fewer feet and equipment on the ground reassures host nations that the Corps recognizes their sovereignty.

Cultural Training

The Corps is also investing in cultural training to help Marines better understand the enemies they are fighting and the people they are helping. Marines will learn about the cultural factors of indigent populations and how they impact the Corps' mission at locations such as the Center for Advanced Operational Culture Learning, scheduled to begin operation in October at Marine Corps Base Quantico, Va.

Understanding and knowing the enemy, his culture and how he thinks, will help Marines more quickly locate and combat the enemy, Gen. Hagee said. "We're doing a much better job

training and preparing units to go over to Iraq and Afghanistan."

New Units

The Corps is also standing up new units to provide capabilities that combatant commanders need for current combat operations and future conflicts.

During the next four years, the Corps is scheduled to stand up two additional active duty infantry battalions, three light armored reconnaissance companies, three reconnaissance platoons and an air and naval gunfire liaison company. On the reserve side, the Corps plans to stand up an antiterrorism battalion, two light armored reconnaissance companies and an intelligence support battalion.

"All the capabilities that we are bringing on can be used both in counter-insurgency and major combat operations," Gen. Hagee said.

To redirect manpower to the new units, other units will be reduced.

On the active duty side, the small craft company located at Marine

Corps Base Camp Lejeune, N.C., is scheduled to be disbanded and Marines will be moved out of low-altitude air defense units.

On the reserve side, the Corps will disband two artillery battalion headquarters, four artillery batteries, one tank battalion headquarters, two tank companies, two air delivery platoons and regimental TOW units. Reserve Marines will also be moved out of low-altitude air defense units.

Foreign Training

Another capability the Corps is adding is Foreign Military Training Units.

"We are going to work with Special Operations Command in this particular effort," Gen. Hagee said. FMTUs will, "(spend) more time on cooperative security, training partner-nation armed forces so that they can better address any security issues they have."

These units will also help foster better relations, "so that if they ask us to come in and help, we already have a working relationship with them," he said.

More Marines, more recruiting, more MOS shifts

A recent approval to increase the Marine Corps' end-strength will help man these new units. The National Defense Authorization Act of fiscal year 2005, passed Oct. 8, 2004, increases the Marine Corps end-strength by 3,000.

Marines in the infantry battalions will be the first to feel the affects of the increase as more than 1,800 Marines will be used to beef up these battalions. "We are going to take the infantry battalions up to 100 percent if they are not currently at 100 percent," the general said.

To reach this increase in end-strength the Corps is putting more recruiters on the streets. About 425 more recruiters will be added to the Marine Corps Recruiting Command.

Recruiting is one of the two most important duties in the Marine Corps right now, the first obviously being combat, said Estrada. "And we wouldn't be able to sustain combat without recruiting."

As the Global War on Terror continues, recruiters have put forth

THE CORPS' GOAL IS TO MAKE A MUCH BETTER, HIGHLY-EDUCATED MARINE THAT HAS FLEXIBILITY, ADAPTABILITY AND AGILITY. AND IF THE MARINE STAYS IN FOR A FULL CAREER, OUR GOAL IS THAT (HE OR SHE) LEAVE THE MARINE CORPS WITH A BACHELOR'S DEGREE.

> FALLUJAH, Iraq – Gunnery Sgt. Ronald Parish, 36, the explosive ordnance disposal team leader attached to 3rd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, carries a large rocket shell to the disposal site a few yards away. Rocket shells were found in the city lying in the open next to a building. Parish, a native of Bradenton, Fla., supervised his team's disposal of the weapons. The Corps is adding 150 Marines to the EOD MOS as a result of findings by the Force Structure Review Group. To learn more about a lateral move into this MOS, see the story of Page 22.

Photo by Staff Sgt. Nathaniel T. Garcia



> HADITHAH DAM, Iraq – Sgt. Maj. Estrada speaks to Marines, sailors and Azerbaijani soldiers serving at Hadithah Dam April 7. The Corps' senior enlisted man told service members that their service has been invaluable to the security and stability of the Iraqi people. The joint efforts by Marines, sailors and soldiers help provide security to one of Iraq's key infrastructures and allows Marines to more effectively patrol the cities and towns of Iraq's Al-Anbar province.

Photo by Cpl. Rocco C. DeFilippis



more effort often times talking not just to the potential Marine but to his or her parents as well, Gen. Hagee said. "Parents are saying, 'Not a bad idea to join the military, but maybe not this year, what about next year?' Still, our recruiters are doing a great job out there."

Though the Marine Corps has missed some recruiting goals in past months, it remains on track to make this year's mission, the commandant said.

"To use a golfing analogy, in December (2004) we shot a birdie. We were over in writing contracts. In January, we shot a bogie. We were under, but we are still par," the general said. "If you look at it, throughout the first four months of the fiscal year, we are above where we need to be to meet our annual goal."

"We are recruiting the right young Americans to be Marines, both in quantity and, most importantly, in quality and we have no intention of lowering our standards."

In addition to the unit changes and more recruiters, the FSRG determined changes needed in the military

occupational specialties due to GWOT requirements.

Some of the MOSs the Corps wants to increase are linguistics, intelligence, satellite communications, counter intelligence and civil affairs. One MOS scheduled for a large

increase is explosives ordnance disposal, which will receive an additional 150 Marines.

FSRG has also determined that some MOSs no longer serve their purpose. On the active duty side, the Corps will do away with the

fabric repairmen MOS and on the reserve side, it will disestablish the food service specialist MOS.

"We will retain those Marines (in the disbanded MOSs) that want to stay (in the Corps) in another MOS," the commandant said. "The Corps is going to take care of them. If they are doing a good job and they want to stay in the Marine Corps, then we are going to ensure that happens."

About 6,000 Marines will be affected by the changes.

What the changes mean for Marines

The commandant and the sergeant major agree that these changes will have positive benefits for Marines.

The new units and increase in end-strength will put additional units into the deployment rotation and help slow the operational tempo, Gen. Hagee said.

Currently, squadrons and battalions are experiencing a one-to-one turn around, they deploy for a rotation, are back for a rotation and then deploy again. "The goal is to get it to two-to-one by the first part of next year," the commandant said.

Addressing shortages in MOSs, additional combat units, more time at home between deployments, "I see that affecting retention and morale in a very positive way," Estrada said.

Retention should go up, but the growth in numbers and shifts should not affect promotions significantly, said Gen. Hagee.

Educating for success

Where Marines will see other changes is in training and education – expect more and better. "We have informed ourselves about what it takes to be successful in this fourth generation warfare," Gen. Hagee said. "You have to be smart and you have to be well educated."

One of the new initiatives designed to help Marines educate themselves is the Educational Roadmap. Roadmaps, broken down by MOS, outline the training and education requirements and opportunities from private to master gunnery sergeant.

"I wish we had something like this when I first came in the Marine Corps," said Estrada. "It gives Marines a single reference to go to set their

own career goals."

"The Corps' goal is to make a much better, highly-educated Marine that has flexibility, adaptability and agility," Gen. Hagee said. "And if the Marine stays in for a full career, our goal is that (he or she) leave the Marine Corps with a bachelor's degree."

But is up to Marines to follow the roadmap and take advantage of the opportunities available, both the general and the sergeant major said.

"The more you know, the more you will be able to prepare your Marines and yourself for combat," Estrada said.

Despite all the changes coming in the next few years, the secret for success in the Corps remains the same. "Whatever the Corps assigns you to do, you do that assignment the very best that you can," said Estrada.

The outcome of FSRG is far-reaching and will affect the Corps for years to come. Many of the changes will be implemented this fiscal year. Most will be completed by fiscal year 2008, with other changes continuing through fiscal year 2012. **M**